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REVIEW OF BOOKS.

Travels through part of the United States and Canada, in 1818 and 1819. By John M. Duncan, A.B.

[Concluded.]

MR. DUNCAN gives a very interesting chapter upon the American Indians, in which he ably combats the selfish arguments that represent them as altogether incapable of civilization. We can all estimate both the source and the value of this application of logic, so exercised as it has been on the subject of Negro slavery:—

“What I have seen and heard among the Tuscarora Indians, confirms to the utmost what I have long believed, that it is folly and worse than folly, to talk of the impossibility of civilizing the North American aborigines. It is a matter of shame to intelligent men, that such assertions should ever have been made. That it may be difficult to carry it into full effect I readily grant, but the principal obstacles which exist, have arisen from the unprincipled conduct of the white traders; many of whom, if morality were the standard of our determination, are much better entitled to the appellation of *savages* than the poor despised Indians.

“Since the period when Europeans first set foot in the western continent, their conduct towards the Indians has been with few exceptions, for there have been a few, a combination of deceit, rapacity, and cruelty, too atrocious to be characterized by any ordinary epithet of aggravation. They found a few thousands of naked men in peaceful possession of immense tracts of fertile ground, watered by vast lakes and navigable rivers; they cast their covetous eyes upon the immense continent, and at last, by fraud and intrigue, succeeded in acquiring possession of nearly the whole, and in almost entirely extirpating the race by which it had been peopled.

“It would be a long and a heart-rending tale, to recount the various circumstances under which this has been accomplished; but features of general resemblance pervade them all. The white men were strong—the red men were weak; the white men were crafty and designing—the red men open and unsuspecting; the white men wanted the land—the red men were obliged to let them have it. Rum, powder, and the bayonet, were the efficient agents in completing the change. The Indians were instigated to mutual havoc and massacre, and the whites completed what they began. The dispirited remnants of the scattered tribes became the slaves of drunkenness and sloth; and the land which was yet left them, they were easily persuaded to exchange for intoxicating liquors, or whatever else their spoilers chose to give. ‘Finally,’ said the Indian chief, ‘they drove us back from time to time into the wilderness, far from the water, and the fish, and the oysters. They have destroyed the game; our people have wasted away, and now we live miserable and wretched, while they are enjoying our fine and beautiful country.’

“After Europeans had thus plundered them of their territory—debased, and almost exterminated their race—to fill up the measure of their cruelty, they slandered their character with every possible misrepresentation, till the Indians of North America are regarded, by most European nations, as the very abstraction and condensation of all that is hateful in human nature;—men whom it is perfectly impossible to reclaim from barbarism, and who may therefore be consigned to destruction, without the slightest injustice, and without any cause for remorse, completely blotted from the catalogue of living creatures.

"One of the principal arguments, if such it can be called, by which some have sought to prove their incapacity for civilization, is the circumstance of their having so rapidly melted away before the encroachments of the whites, and having so seldom become incorporated with their invaders. But any other result must have been almost miraculous. Let it be recollected that the whites, not contented with destroying themselves as many as they could, took every opportunity of artfully instigating war between one tribe and another; and that on every occasion on which the various European settlers themselves fell out and fought, each party collected to its aid multitudes of Indian warriors, to be food for the weapons of their destructive warfare. In the contests between the French and British colonists, in the revolutionary war, and in the recent unhappy renewal of hostilities, the Indians were, without reason or pity, involved in contests in which they were no way interested, and crushed between the two contending powers, like grain between the millstones. Rancorous hatred to the whites and to each other, has been promoted in every possible way; spirituous liquors copiously administered for the basest of purposes; immorality of every kind eagerly promoted, loathsome and hitherto unknown diseases propagated; instruction of every kind withheld from them; and yet in the face of all this, we are called upon to hold up our hands like simpletons, and wonder that the Indians have disappeared!"

Let us, however, hear both sides: Mr. Duncan quotes from a leading American the most forcible condensation of the line of argument which he controverts:—

"'It is tolerably well ascertained,' says the journalist, 'that they (the Indians) cannot support the neighbourhood of civilization. Foreign and ignorant judges may sneer at this, but it is a simple fact ascertained by experience. To take measures to preserve the Indians, is to take measures to preserve so much barbarity, helplessness, and want, to the exclusion of so much industry and thriftiness.—The object of true humanity is, not blindly to better the condition of a given individual whether he will be bettered or not, but to put a happier individual in the place of a less happy one. If it can be done by changing the nature of the latter, it is well; if it cannot, leave him to the operation of his character and habits; do not resist the order of Providence which is carrying him away, and when he is gone, a civilized man will step into his place and your end is attained.'"

In speaking of the original peopling of America, Mr. Duncan comes to a conclusion, that the various remnants of antiquity in the State of the Ohio, and elsewhere, are *not* of Indian origin. The human bones found in some of these *tumuli*, and the fragments of armour composed of copper, overlaid with silver, bespeak a different people; for until the arrival of the Europeans, the Indians were entirely unacquainted with metals, and the bones which have been excavated denote quite a different race of men; nor have the Indians any sort of tradition concerning these relics. The following account of three distinct Indian languages is curious:—

"Among the Indians who formerly peopled that part of the continent which lies east of the Mississippi, three languages appear to have been spoken, radically different from each other. At least all the dialects, of which any vestiges survive, have been satisfactorily traced to one or other of three great sources; among which as yet no affinity has been detected, except that of a somewhat similar grammatical structure. We should probably err, however, were we to decide that these nations were not originally of a common origin. They were unacquainted with letters, and their languages were therefore liable to perpetual change; and as it is but lately that these supposed primitive tongues have been reduced to so small a number, it seems not improbable that farther investigation may limit them yet more.

"These languages have been called the Iroquois, the Lenapé, and the Floridian. The first is the origin of the dialects spoken by the Six Nations, to which I have already alluded, and other tribes formerly existing north of the St. Lawrence. The second was spoken by the Delawares and others, once occupying the greater part of the interior of the United States. The third is spoken by the Creeks, and others in the southern States, and Florida.

"The Lenapé tongue appears to have prevailed much more extensively than either of the others, and was, so far as we yet know, much more copious and systematic.

Its grammatical system is highly artificial, and disappoints completely every *a priori* idea which we can have of an unwritten language spoken by roving hunters. In place of the division of nouns into the genders, it recognises only the distinctions of animate and inanimate, and this classification passes also into verbs. It possesses a singular, dual, and two plurals, a particular and a general. In the verb, the variety of moods and tenses appears to have exceeded that of the Greek; and its flexion is modified not only by pronominal prefixes and affixes, as in the Hebrew, but also by others having an adverbial and conjunctive power. The verb enters besides into combination with nouns, adjectives, and prepositions, with a facility unknown in European languages, so that a very complicated idea which in modern languages would require a circumlocution, is intelligibly condensed in the Lenapé into a single word, expressive of person, action, time, place, and circumstance. From this characteristic of the Indian languages, for it extends throughout them all, an American writer has given them the very appropriate epithet of *polysynthetic*.

"The language of the Iroquois is thought to exist in its purest state in the Mohawk dialect. The other five nations readily understand what is written in the Mohawk, although each individually has a different tongue. The Iroquois seems not to have been so critically analyzed as the Lenapé, but so far as has been yet ascertained, it corresponds in most of its grammatical peculiarities, particularly that of being polysynthetic. It recognizes, however, the distinction of masculine and feminine in nouns.

"The Floridian is less known than either of the others, and with regard to those dialects prevalent to the westward of the Mississippi, there seems to exist no certain information."

The comparison drawn by Mr. Duncan between the inhabitants of the two banks of the river St. Lawrence is very amusing, and the difference is pleasantly illustrated by the following passage:—

"Were a canal cut from Montreal to La Chine, a distance of only nine miles, those troublesome rapids which intervene would be avoided, and the necessity superseded which at present exists of transporting so far, by land, all the merchandise which goes up the country. Such a canal has been talked of for about twenty years, and some time ago 25,000*l.* was voted for it, by the provincial legislature. Farther than this it has not yet advanced. In the mean time these fidgetty Yankees are pushing vigorously forward their canal of 364 miles between lake Erie and the Hudson, and the other of 60, between the Hudson and lake Champlain; and possibly when they have the whole finished, they may take a fancy to cross the St. Lawrence, and in a mere frolic turn up the nine miles between Montreal and La Chine;—it will hardly be a fortnight's work for them."

The ascertainment of the scientific line agreed upon for the boundary between the United States and Canada, it seems, has produced unexpected results to both sides:—

"About eleven miles from Isle aux Noix we pass Rousse's Point, upon the western bank, where a very fine semicircular stone fort has been erected since last war by the American Government. This in the event of future hostilities would have been, in the hands of the Americans, a complete safeguard against the advance of any hostile squadron from Canada; but it has lately been whispered that the Commissioners for ascertaining the forty-fifth parallel of latitude, the boundary line between the two countries, have discovered that this fine fort stands on British ground, and will of course become an unintentional present from the United States to his majesty. The chief astronomer employed on behalf of Britain was a passenger with me in the steam boat, but he preserved a very prudent silence, and declined answering any questions on the subject.*"

The following account of the commemoration of St. Andrew's day at New York is very characteristic, both of Mr. Duncan and of the mixture of old and new sentiment which necessarily prevails among the various classes of emigrants from the old world:—

* This report was eventually confirmed, and excited not a little exultation on the one side, and mortification on the other. The theodolites of the astronomers however have subsequently made another discovery, less to the taste of the Canadians, which is, that the only navigable channel of the Long Sault rapid is on the American side of the line, and of course that our boats must ask leave to navigate it.

" Nov. 30th. St. Andrew's day. A broad blue banner is flying from one of the windows of the City Hotel, 'blent with the silver cross, to Scotia dear,' and at half past four I go like a true Scotsman to dine with the St. Andrew's Society of New-York. My heart throbbed high as I passed along Broadway, after breakfast, and saw the national banner waving over the democratic heads of the New Yorkers—Scotland for ever!

" Dec. 1st. I was sadly mortified last night;—a miserably insipid mixture of *Yankeeism* and *Land-of-Cakeism*; neither one nor other, but both spoiled.

" At four I repaired with Mr. — to the hotel; paid five dollars for a ticket, and was introduced in due form to the president *pro tempore* of the Society.* He and the other office-bearers received their *brither Scots* in the large dancing hall of the hotel; they were conspicuous among the men of the *north countrie*, by broad blue and white collars, from which hung a large medallion of the patron of Scotland.

" While dinner was serving in the adjoining room, our national feelings were roused by a brawny limbed son of the mountains, who with the drone of a pair of immense bagpipes under his arm, strutted up and down the hall, braying Scottish airs with all his might. By and by the dinner bell rang, the ample portal was thrown open, and the northern tide flowed in—'The Campbells are coming aho! aho!' The president took post at the convex extremity of a large horse-shoe table, the vice-presidents at either end, and when all had arranged themselves in due order, the chaplain of the society, Dr. —, was called upon to officiate. The *gillies* of the hotel, however, had neglected to give the signal in the antichamber, and while the reverend clergyman was raising his voice within, the pipes were still vociferating without, so that the sounds drowned each other and we lost the benefit of both.

" As soon as the covers were removed, my eyes ran over the ample board in quest of the barley kail, the smoking sheep's head and trotters, the sonsy haggis,

'Wha's pin wad help to mend a mill,
In time o' need.'

But alas! these national luxuries found no place in the bill of fare; even a solitary fragment of oatmeal cake was not to be seen. A sumptuous dinner was before us, but not a solitary dish that was characteristic of our native land.* The toasts however I expected would be more commemorative of auld langsyne, and the music exclusively national;—presently some scrapers of catgut, perched in the orchestra, twisted *Yankee Doodle* out of their asthmatic instruments, and scarcely was a Scottish tune given us during the whole of the evening, whose effect was not immediately neutralized by an American one.

" By and by the cloth was removed, and the president gave the word,—'The day, and all that honour it;' which was repeated at right and left by the croupiers, and swallowed with enthusiasm. 'Scotland the land of our nativity,' 'America the country of our adoption,' followed in due course. 'The President of the United States;'—rather too soon, thought I. 'The King of Great Britain and all friendly powers;'—The King of Great Britain and all friendly powers!—and is it only because he is one of the *friendly powers*, that Scotsmen at a national anniversary drink their good old king's health! It needed the king's anthem, which followed this toast, and would have needed more, to make it palatable. 'The Vice President of the United States, elevated by the voice of a free and intelligent people, to the second situation in the only representative government upon earth.' Och-hon a-ree! Och-hon a-ree!—and are Scotsmen in America so utterly regardless of their country's renown, that they thus at a St. Andrew's dinner slight the sovereign of the land, and slander its free constitution—the envy and the admiration of the whole world?—and all because the Vice President of the United States, and the Mayor of New York, had *honoured* the Society with their company? Truly such Scotsmen should abjure the name."

* The President was at that time in England.

* On remonstrating afterwards with one of the office-bearers of the society on the inconsistency of such a St. Andrew's dinner, he told me that the cook had tried on one occasion to manufacture a haggis, but that the appetites of the Americo-Scotsmen had become too refined to relish such fare. They sipped a morsel or two from the point of a tea spoon, and then hollowed out "Waiter, take away *this*." I heard in another quarter that into the said haggis a few raisins had been introduced, as an American improvement; but this I could hardly think possible.

Under the head of New York, which concludes these very able and instructive volumes, is comprehended much of the general observation and characteristic remark which form no mean part of their value,—the remarks of Mr. Duncan upon that slavery, the existence of which forms so great and inconsistent a blot in the otherwise fair social and political pretensions of the United States. It is not, however, by a blind attention to American delinquency alone, in this particular, that our author distinguishes himself; on the contrary, he admits that the introduction of slavery in America was against the wishes of the early colonists—a point also ably set forward in the recent publication of Mr. Barham, who shows that both in the West Indies and the Anglo-American states, Great Britain at once both established and protected the nefarious trade and system of Slavery, the consequences of which are now becoming so great a source of perplexity in all three. Mr. Duncan observes, that when the United States became independent, they should have done away with slavery; and then proceeds to remark, that some of them *have* done so, but that others hold fast to the system with the utmost tenacity. True,—with precisely the same sort of tenacity which characterises the West Indian proprietor; and what argument can be used against the consequent procrastination in the federal government, which is not equally applicable to our own in regard to the West Indian colonies? The silly boast that a slave cannot exist on British ground where they are not wanted, while they are an established property where they can be made useful, is not a whit less inconsistent than the correspondent vaunts in regard to the *only* land of freedom, so frequent in the mouths of the Americans. In point of fact, the struggles of property and self-interest are very similar in both countries, and if the faultless are to throw the first stone, a stone will never be thrown. This, in regard to the main question;—in reference to many of the incidental iniquities growing out of the system of slavery in the United States, Mr. Duncan is more successful; and he mentions one or two in relation to the kidnapping of free negroes, which are of the very essence of shameful oppression and injustice.*

Mr. Duncan is very amusing upon the newspaper press of America, which, with certain exceptions, seems to be planned upon the model of our Irish journals, and to exhibit in point of party hostility, and personal attack, a very close resemblance. They however fall short of England, Ireland, and Scotland, in one particular,—the construction of journals under the protection of party, with a view to malignant attack, slander, and annoyance alone. They have neither Blackwoods, Bulls, Beacons, nor Antidotes at present; for, although their inferior prints can scold coarsely enough, they display little of that concentrated and quintessential rancour and malignity, a small portion of which, like the newly discovered *acetate of morphine*, can poison with safety, and assassinate without redress.

With respect to American literature, the sentiments of Mr. Duncan seem to us to be eminently sound—the observations upon the operation of periodical criticism especially. That it may now and then operate to alarm and repress peculiar genius, we allow; but that it tends to

* See Note, Vol. II, page 256.

forward the mass is equally certain. Satisfied that the advancement of many vigorous and healthy plants is far beyond the forced production of a few rare ones, we willingly accept the evil with the good, although every way disposed to lessen the alloy as much as possible :—

“ Much has been written on the subject of American literature, and various theories have been proposed to account for the comparative scantiness of original compositions, and the frequent inferiority of much that has been written. I have no new hypothesis to propose upon the subject. The fact is sufficiently accounted for by the state of the country, as a young and a rising one ; offering more encouragement to commercial and agricultural adventure, than to literary and philosophical pursuits ; and probably this kind of mental tutelage has existed longer than its natural time, from the influence of a hereditary disposition in the natives to look elsewhere for their literature. Those who were disposed to write, felt a misgiving in their hearts as to their own strength, and allowed their powers to be deadened by a chilling awe of foreign criticism. Those again who were to purchase their writings, felt no confidence in literary productions of domestic origin ; they did not expect much, and they were slow to admit the existence of even moderate excellence. Every vessel from Liverpool brings an importation of new authors, which the accommodating booksellers immediately transmute from a costly into a cheap form, and a torrent of British authors, of legally accredited talent, deluges the land, and carries with it the minds and the partialities of the multitude. Our Reviews have contributed to increase and perpetuate this feeling of intellectual subordination. They have almost always in criticising American authors doled out their praise in very niggardly portions, and frequently accompanied the little which they gave, with a tone of affected condescension more disheartening than censure ; patting, as it were, the author like the schoolboy on the head, and comforting him with—
‘ Very well *for an American*,---very well indeed !’

“ Indications, I think, are very plainly discernible of a change in this respect. Not many large or aspiring works indeed have yet been published, of a very superior kind, but here and there a fugitive essay has made its appearance, or discourse, or memoir, like those to which I have alluded ; not unfrequently without the author’s name, who seems to shrink from the wrath of the literary inquisitors ; many of these exhibit a purity and nervousness of style, with an independence of mind which may probably stimulate their authors to try their strength in more sustained efforts. The public voice too has begun to cry shame, at the sceptical disbelief which has so long prevailed, of the possibility of American literary talent ; and when some master spirit has fairly vindicated his own inherent strength, and set the bold example of revolt from European domination, he will doubtless find a band of brothers, ready to rise with enthusiasm and determination to aid him in the conflict ; and a second revolution, yet more honourable than the first, will sooner or later be the consequence. Men have no conception of what they are able to achieve, till they fairly task their energies in the trial. There is abundance of talent in the country, conversational, oratorical, and professional ; there is widely diffused a great amount of general information, and its inseparable attendant, a desire to acquire more ; there is much purity of moral sentiment, and much sterling religious principle ; there is a fair proportion of classical learning, and a still larger share of scientific knowledge ;---these are the very elements of literature, even of the highest order, and although they may slumber unseen and unheard of for a time, the connexion of cause and effect must cease, if they do not ultimately blaze forth in enduring brilliancy.

“ The powerful aid of periodical criticism will not be wanting ; and who can calculate what that mighty engine has wrought in Britain ? It has drawn forth latent talent, it has encouraged and rewarded timid worth, it has spread a taste for reading and a taste for philosophizing, and it has infused a literary spirit into thousands who knew not its inspiration ; it has at the same time checked presumption, exposed ignorance, and punished folly ; and although these beneficial effects have not been produced without a good deal of concomitant mischief, and sometimes cases of cruel individual injustice, yet no one can dispassionately estimate the relative amounts, without at once confessing that the good has far outweighed the evil.”

Our author, with a little occasional inconsistency, excusable enough in a Printer to the University of Glasgow, detracts from the value of the open representative system of America, and speculates on the probable result when the country becomes more populous,—“ a pure de-

mocracy is not fit for *fallen creatures*." Mr. Duncan, however, in the following animated passage, finds out that complete *Religious Freedom* is perfectly so; and we ask him how it can possibly exist while representation is a partial and private property? The spirit of a peculiar sect which is prevalent in these observations does not detract from their general soundness:—

"In the religious freedom which America enjoys, I see a more unquestioned superiority. In Britain we enjoy toleration, but here they enjoy liberty. If government has a right to grant a toleration to any particular set of religious opinions, it has also a right to take it away; and such a right with regard to opinions exclusively religious I would deny in all cases, because totally inconsistent with the nature of religion, in the proper meaning of the word, and equally irreconcilable with civil liberty, rightly so called. God has given to each of us his inspired word, and a rational mind to which that word is addressed. He has also made known to us, that each for himself must answer at his tribunal for his principles and conduct. What man then, or body of men, has a right to tell me, "You do not think aright on religious subjects, but we will tolerate your error?" The answer is a most obvious one, "Who gave you authority to dictate?—or what exclusive claim have you to infallibility?" If my sentiments do not lead me into conduct inconsistent with the welfare of my fellow-creatures, the question as to their accuracy or fallacy is one between God and my own conscience; and though a fair subject for argument, is none for compulsion.

"The Inquisition undertook to regulate astronomical science; and Kings and Parliaments have with equal propriety presumed to legislate upon questions of theology. The world has outgrown the former, and it will one day be ashamed that it has been so long of outgrowing the latter. The founders of the American republic saw the absurdity of employing the Attorney-General to refute deism and infidelity, or of attempting to influence opinion on abstract subjects by penal enactment; they saw also the injustice of taxing the whole, to support the religious opinions of the few, and have set an example which older governments will one day or other be compelled to follow.

"In America the question is not, What is his creed?—but, What is his conduct? Jews have all the privileges of Christians; Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Independents meet on common ground. No religious test is required to qualify for public office, except in some cases a mere verbal assent to the truth of the Christian religion; and in every court throughout the country, it is optional whether you give your affirmation or your oath.

"It has been often said, that the disinclination of the heart to religious truth, renders a state establishment absolutely necessary, for the purpose of christianizing the country. Ireland and America can furnish abundant evidence of the fallacy of such an hypothesis. In the one country we see an ecclesiastical establishment of the most costly description, utterly inoperative in dispelling ignorance or refuting error; in the other, no establishment of any kind, and yet religion making daily and hourly progress, promoting enquiry, diffusing knowledge, strengthening the weak, and mollifying the hardened. The religious aspect of America is no doubt chequered with gloomy spots, and I believe that in a large portion of the southern States, ignorance and irreligion prevail to a deplorable extent; but even in our own comparatively small portion of the globe's surface, how large a proportion of parishes are to be found, where there is all the apparatus of religion, a steeple, a benefice, and an incumbent, but an utter famine of the bread of life? and in how many more do we find that dissenterism, that is, systematic opposition to the established religion, has been the sole means of preserving the knowledge of the truth?

"When we dispassionately examine the history and present condition of the various divisions of the United States, we shall be constrained to admit that religion has made as extensive progress as we could possibly have expected from any establishment; nay, that it is probably in as active a state of advancement, in the older sections of the country, as in any part of the world. If any would imagine that an establishment would have improved matters, let him look to Canada; and even setting aside all reference to the French population, let him tell us what has been effected, among those of British descent, by a lordly episcopacy, supported by annual stipends from government, and a seventh part of all granted lands. I refer, of course, in these remarks, to evangelical religion, properly so called.

The advice of our hard-headed traveller, in respect to emigration to

America, is equally sensible and judicious, steering equally clear of the obliquity of vision arising out of political discontent at native country, on the one side; and of the bilious colouring of disappointed adventurers on the other. It thus forcibly concludes:—

“In a word, my advice would be; If you are enjoying a moderate degree of prosperity at home, do not think of quitting it. Your success in America is at best problematical; while the difference of customs, manner of living, and climate, is what many will find it very difficult to endure. Of those who emigrate, there are certainly many who prosper, and some who accumulate fortunes; but how many are there at home who are equally successful, who have never stirred from their native city? Hundreds have come to America, who bitterly lament their folly; and who have found, to their dear-bought experience, that gold neither paves the streets, nor grows upon the trees.

“There cannot be a doubt, however, that the United States are a rapidly rising nation. There is much in their political and social system that may need improvement; but there is also much in both from which the older Hemisphere might profitably take instruction. They know nothing of the feudal barbarisms, which yet in a thousand ways obstruct the progress of knowledge and improvement even in Britain. There are no close corporations, to prevent an ingenious man from reaping the reward of his skill, in any branch to which he may direct it. At home, were I to discover an improved way of baking a loaf, or a more expeditious and durable way of constructing a shoe, I could not practise my invention. Both are chartered crafts; in the one of which I should have to purchase my freedom, and in the other I could not purchase it at all. No such exclusive privileges exist here.

“Discovery in arts and sciences have already made rapid progress in America, and in all probability will continue to do so. There is an elasticity in the national character, which makes them in some measure discontented with beaten tracks;—all are aiming at something new; and when all are aiming, some must be successful.

“As merchants, none but the British can match them for restless activity and enterprize; and they are happily free from some of the fetters which encumber our motions. There is no East India Company to annoy them with its monopoly; and they are already the favourites in the Chinese market, in spite of the influence of our eastern nabobs. Their merchant ships probably excel those of all nations for elegance of model, and rapidity of sailing, and there is not a free port in the world where their sailors may not be found.

“Of their future destiny and influence we can say nothing; but he is not a friend to his species who does not wish well to the United States. A grand experiment in politics and religion is there going forward—an experiment which, if successful, will be productive of unestimated happiness to the human race; and whether successful or not, will, we know, be one in that chain of events, which is to issue in diffusing over the whole earth,

—“A liberty
Unsung by poets, and by senators unpraised;
Which monarchs cannot grant, nor all the powers
Of earth and hell confederate take away!”

The concluding chapter of this work is taken up with a summary of the state of religion in the United States, as exemplified in its places of worship, and Missionary, Bible, *Episcopal*, and other distributive and inculcative societies. The detail, of course, is not of a nature for extract in a necessarily brief review like our own; but there is quite enough to overthrow the position of the disinterested reasoners, who regard rich ecclesiastical establishments as essential to purity and intensity of faith. The United States are clearly as actively religious as any country in Christendom; possibly, having nothing to contend for in that particular, in the simple advancement of assumed truth they are a few degrees more so. Mankind are more ready to communicate general advantages, than to share a monopoly.

With a restriction to the nature of the information which Mr. Duncan in his preface more directly professes to supply, we hesitate not

to affirm, that we have been far more interested and amused with his labours than with those of any of his more recent predecessors. His religious peculiarities and predilections we have described, but possessing, as he does, a happy talent for observation, and for the conveyance of that which he observes, it is easy to allow for his excess of aversion to Socinianism and church organs, as well as for that most unfortunate of the fruits of unmeasured attachment to an exclusive and excluding creed,—a disposition to query the benefit of all exertions in the way of amelioration and improvement, which spring from other sources. The natural powers and mother wit of Mr. Duncan being happily stronger than even his prejudices, the result comes out pretty well after all, and the Americans need not seek for a more “honest chronicler than Griffith.”

Looking at the every day increasing mass of corrective information, in relation to the United States of America, we think that the time is not far distant, when the general notions concerning this land of freedom and energy will be tolerably accurate. We think we perceive at present, that the vulgar and exaggerated tone of the virulent declaimers on both sides the Atlantic is declining; and that, while such contemptible misrepresentations as those in the Quarterly Review are seen through and despised, the shallow misconception in regard to emigration, and the inducements to cultivate the American wilderness, is equally appreciated. That the United States form a republic, and flourish without a church establishment, would be quite enough for Quarterly Reviewers, if even their rising greatness produced none of the inflation and presumption of which it supplies a great deal; and which, by the way, rather furnishes the subject than the object of so much Admiralty and be-laurelled abuse. Labouring in their vocation, these stipendiaries must debase a rising *republic* at all events, and in some respects, a rival maritime one still more; while, on the other hand, a consciousness of high destinies, and a perception of growing importance, is continually producing materials for this useless verbal castigation. We say *verbal* castigation, for it will exceedingly perplex Messrs. Barrow and Southey to discover a single act of critical and practical statesmanship, in which the authorities of America have not displayed, and do not display, a coolness of judgment, a soundness of discrimination, and a happy union of energy and decision, which might do honour to the oldest government in the world. We are not aware of any European diplomacy which has reason to boast of its superior dexterity in a business-like intercourse with that of America.

It being impossible to deny the vast expansion of moral and political sources of greatness in this vast rising country, it is part of loyal scepticism to look forward to a period when so loose a government can no longer exist. Even Mr. Duncan, without giving in to the usual Tory jargon on this theme, is of opinion that a time may come when the extent of personal representation may lead to confusion. To say what any country will be two or three centuries hence, would be difficult:—what was our own as many centuries ago?—but to imagine human nature so besotted as to grow away from free institutions into close ones, with all the advantages of an early education in the principles of freedom, is what we cannot be readily brought to believe. It

is contrary to the tenor of all modern history; a truth which, in the long run, even Spain and Portugal will assist to demonstrate. It is useless to appeal to ancient history; the printing-press "has changed all that;" for although men continue the same, the circumstances which surround them are totally different. Neither, in respect to America, is any parallel to be drawn from the unfitness for representative freedom of the despotically-governed inhabitants of Europe. Emancipated slaves are almost unavoidably tumultuous; but what is to render educated freemen so unruly? It would be unfortunate indeed, if the best and noblest theoretical principles, reduced to action, could not form for themselves as safe and commodious railways as the most odious and unnatural practices and misgovernment. Let us *hope*—nay, let us *trust* the contrary; and without clogging the clearness of our perceptions with visionary ideas of perfectibility, spurn at these insidious attempts to make that unavoidable which is only contingent, and thus cowardly give up the game of liberty as "unfit for *fallen creatures*."

In fact, in reference to these gratuitous anticipations, not altogether discouraged by a party in America itself, whose object it is to temper the impetuous tide of democracy, we can look only to one rational ground of apprehension,—the necessity that will sooner or later arise for strengthening the hands of the general Executive. This must sooner or later follow; and to guard against the effects of this unavoidable delegation will be the grand difficulty of the friends of freedom in America; but with neither established church nor an aristocracy, it will scarcely be insurmountable. There is a great difference between pulling down establishments and peerages, and preventing their formation.

To conclude, the United States of America may be regarded as a grand although fortuitous experiment on the side of liberty; promising in the extreme, and likely, in its consequences, to modify the future history of the world, by shewing the high degree of freedom to which man may be socially and politically framed, and in which able and efficient national government may be safely yet energetically administered.

An Essay on Apparitions. By John Alderson, M. D.

MOST of our general readers are acquainted with the very acute and illustrative essay of Dr. Ferriar of Manchester on this subject. The present comparatively brief production is republished, in order to claim for its author a priority in regard to the theory advanced by both. There is an order of mind to which this dispute will be of some consequence; but we must confess that to us it is of very little. The two points established by it, we imagine, are *now* admitted by most who can boast of *mens sana in corpore sano*, always presuming the non-interference of prejudice or superstition. In point of fact, however, Dr. Alderson is clearly entitled to the merit of simply stating the probable rise of every ghost story that ever was manufactured without the aid of imposture; and of deducing from facts and cases submitted to his *own* observation and medical skill those conclusions, which Dr. Ferriar subsequently, and we hope without intentional concealment, assumed the merit of

being the first to deduce and enumerate. Dr. Alderson published first in 1810, Dr. Ferriar in 1813; but the former gentleman's statement amounting simply to a paper drawn up for a literary society, escaped due general notice in the first instance; and although subsequently republished, the more popular work of Dr. Ferriar had, in some measure, allayed all curiosity on the subject.

Next to the influence of superstition, and the discouragement uniformly given from quarters which it is unnecessary to specify, to scepticism generally, we may attribute the lingering credulity in regard to supernatural appearances, to that universality of tradition, upon which Dr. Johnson has laid so mischievous a stress in his *Rasselas*. It is impossible to get rid of so much testimony, by the general charge of imposture; and a vague imputation of the effects to a disordered state of the imagination was not sufficient to the assailment of undeniable asseveration. The great merit of the works of the Drs. Alderson and Ferriar consists in a simple and practical exhibition of cases, which account at once for all the supposed phenomena, and leave the credit of the various grave persons unimpeached who have either deposed to the existence of phantoms from their own experience, or who have been irresistibly led to confide in the statements of witnesses in whom they could do no other than implicitly confide. In this small tract, Dr. Alderson enumerates four or five cases, that came under his own cognizance and cure, which, although few, are in themselves sufficient to shew the real source of the vast variety of visitation from the other world, which has eternally haunted the mind of man, and existed in legend and record, in every stage of human existence. We give the first of them as the most curious and comprehensive:---

"I was called upon some time ago to visit Mr. —, who at that time kept a dram shop. Having at different times attended him, and thence knowing him very well; I was struck with something singular in his manner on my first entrance. He went up stairs with me, but evidently hesitated, occasionally, as he went. When he got into his chamber, he expressed some apprehension, lest I should consider him insane, and send him to the asylum at York, whither I had not long before sent one of his pot-companions.—'Whence all these apprehensions?—What is the matter with you!—Why do you look so full of terror?' He then sat down, and gave me a history of his complaint.

"About a week or ten days before, after drawing some liquor in his cellar for a girl, he desired her to take away the oysters which lay upon the floor, and which he supposed she had dropped;—the girl, thinking him drunk, laughed at him, and went out of the room.—He endeavoured to take them up himself, and to his great astonishment could find none.—He was met going out of the cellar, when at the door he met a soldier, whose looks he did not like, attempting to enter. He desired to know what he wanted there; and upon receiving no answer, but, as he thought, a menacing look, he sprang forward to seize the intruder, and, to his no small surprise, found that it was a phantom. The cold sweat hung upon his brow—he trembled in every limb—it was the dusk of the evening; as he walked along the passage the phantom flitted before his eyes—he attempted to follow it, resolutely determined to satisfy himself; but as this vanished, there appeared others at a distance, and he exhausted himself by fruitless attempts to lay hold of them. He hastened to his family, with marks of terror and confusion; for, though a man hitherto of the most undaunted resolution, he confessed to me that he now felt what it was to be completely terrified. During the whole of that night he was constantly tormented with a variety of spectres, sometimes of people who had been long dead, at other times of friends who were living; and harassed himself with continually getting out of bed, to ascertain whether the people he saw were real or not. Nor could he always distinguish who were and who were not real customers, when they came into the room, so that his conduct became the subject of observation; and though it was for a time attributed to private drinking, it was at last suspected to

arise from some other cause. When I was sent for, the family were under the full conviction that he was insane, although they confessed, that in everything, except the foolish notion of seeing apparitions, he was perfectly rational and steady. During the whole of the time that he was relating his case to me, and his mind was fully occupied, he felt the most gratifying relief, for in all that time he had not seen one apparition: and he was elated with pleasure indeed, when I told him I should not send him to the asylum, since his was a complaint I could cure at his own house. But whilst I was writing a prescription, and had suffered him to be at rest, I saw him get up suddenly, and go with a hurried step to the door.—‘What did you do that for?’—he looked ashamed and mortified, and replied, ‘I had been so well whilst in conversation with you, that I could not believe that the phantom I saw enter the room was not really a soldier, and I got up to convince myself.’

“I need not here detail particularly the medical treatment adopted; but it may be as well to state the circumstances which probably led to the complaint, and the principle acted on in the cure. Some time previously he had had a quarrel with a drunken soldier, who attempted, against his inclination, to enter his house at an unseasonable hour, and in the struggle to turn him out, the soldier drew his bayonet, and, having struck him across the temples, divided the temporal artery; in consequence of which he lost a very large quantity of blood before a surgeon arrived, there being no one present who knew that, in such cases, simple compression with the finger upon the spouting artery, would stop the effusion of blood. He had scarcely recovered from the effects of this loss of blood, when he undertook to accompany a friend in his walking-match against time, in which he went forty-two miles in nine hours. Elated with success, he spent the whole of the following day in drinking; but found himself, a short time afterwards, so much out of health, that he came to the resolution of abstaining altogether from liquor. It was in the course of the week following this abstinence from his usual habits, that he had the disease he now complained of. All his symptoms continued to increase for several days till I saw him, allowing him no time for rest. Never was he able to get rid of these shadows by night when in bed, nor by day when in motion; though he sometimes walked miles with that view, and at others went into a variety of company. He told me he suffered even bodily pain, from the severe lashing of a waggoner with his whip, who came every night to a particular corner of his room, but who always disappeared when he jumped out of bed to retort, which he did several nights successively. The whole of this complaint was effectually removed by bleeding, by leeches, and by active purgatives. After the first employment of these means, he saw no more phantoms in the day time; and after the second, once only, between sleeping and waking, saw the milkman in his bedroom. He has remained perfectly rational and well ever since, and can go out in the dark as fearlessly as ever, being fully convinced that the ghosts which he was so confident he saw, were merely the creatures of disease.

The summing up of Dr. Alderson on the cases of which the foregoing takes the lead, is simple, explicit, and undeniable:---

“The hallucination, which the foregoing cases detail, may be distinguished from partial insanity, from delirium, from somnambulism, and from reverie, to all of which it bears some resemblance. In partial insanity, the patient, though sensible on most subjects, is generally intent on one particular train of thought; and, whenever he has occasion to speak upon that subject, he flies off into some absurd notion or other, and no argument whatever can drive him from his purpose. In delirium, the patient neither knows where he is nor what he does, except for a few moments, when violently roused. In somnambulism, there are certain voluntary motions performed, without our being sensible of volition. In reverie, the mind is so wholly intent on its own particular train of thoughts, that the patient takes no notice whatever of any thing around him.

“But in such cases as I have detailed, there is no point on which the patients can be said to be irrational; they merely state that they perceive objects, where we know, and where they can very easily convince themselves, that they do not exist:---

——— ‘their thoughts
Are combinations of disjointed things;
And forms impalpable and unperceived
Of others’ sight, familiar are to them.’

“When this circumstance occurs in the day-time, and more frequent opportunities for examination are afforded, they do convince themselves of their non-existence,---

and, when, as I have said before, their own reason is assisted by the more cultivated and unimpaired understanding of those around them,---when there is no art, no attempt at imposition, the whole is clearly made to appear a mere delusion, a *deceptio visus*, arising from a temporary disordered state of the animal functions, wholly independent of the persons or bodies those figures represent. But what must have been the case in other circumstances? Suppose these phantoms had only appeared in the night?---suppose the physician had affected all the arts and tricks of the designing magician, or the crafty priest---how would it have been then?---Why, precisely what we have before asserted:---they would have gone through life with a belief in the actual re-appearance of the dead, as well as the capability of communicating with the spirits of their departed friends; and thus they might have contributed their evidence to the vile impositions of those who have made a gain of the credulity of mankind, and who have, from interested motives, encouraged the fear of ghosts, the worship of demons, the belief of supernatural agency, which they could controul by their spells; of those who, like Owen Glendower, can call spirits from the vasty deep, or of the mystic masons, who pretend to show you the spirits of long departed friends. Here too we see how a Mahomet, a Swedenborg, a Jacob Behmen, may have not only imposed on the world, but also on themselves, the whole sarrago of their celestial communications, and converse with superior beings; and it seems to me probable, that certain professors of this art may have the power of throwing themselves into that state, in which they can bring before them those imaginary unsubstantial beings. This is no new opinion. If I remember right, it has been related of the Pythian priestess, and appears to me to be the case with the wizards of Kamschatka, and is probably the object of the whirling motion of the dervises, and of the serpent-eaters in Egypt."

Dr. Alderson further observes, that the common argument against ghosts,---that they are only seen by *one person at a time*, although indicative of the real source of the illusion, has failed to command the belief which is due to it. In point of fact, what we have already hinted is too true,---that certain gifted and amiable persons, possessed of minds of not the very first concoction, have been involuntarily disposed to connect a disbelief in apparitions with a state of mind indisposed to the necessary quantum of faith in other matters. We have before alluded to the opinion put by Dr. Johnson into the mouth of Imlac, in *Rasselas*. Cumberland adopts a similar argument: and hear Addison, who wrote before either of them:---

"I think a person who is terrified with the imagination of ghosts and spectres much more reasonable than one who, contrary to the reports of all historians, sacred and profane, ancient and modern, and to the traditions of all nations, thinks the appearance of ghosts fabulous and groundless. Could I not give myself up to this general testimony of mankind, I should to the relations of particular persons, who are now living, and whom I cannot distrust in other matters of fact."

It was in the reign of Queen Anne that Glanville wrote his *Book upon Witches*; and upon the unphilosophical principle thus assumed by Addison, Johnson, Cumberland, and their great and little followers, the grave testimonies which that sagacious divine produced of an universal belief in witchcraft, ought to be received as a proof of its existence. Witches suckling devils, riding on broomsticks, and transformed into hares, were everyday occurrences, as witness the reverend and worshipful hands of the Clergymen, the Justices of the Peace, &c. &c. of half the parishes in England. Addison lived to see the penal Acts founded on such testimony repealed, and the belief in it laughed to scorn; and would have done well to distrust it on kindred occasions.

Upon the whole, this brief essay, by Dr. Alderson, at once supplies, in a small compass, an unanswerable antidote to a superstitious belief in ghosts on *testimony*, and supplies precautionary information, which

will frequently rally the disordered mind into a salutary combat with the effects of disease. Our sole regret is on the score of the innumerable good stories which will shrink into most inelegant fiction, by the cold touch of a philosophy so inelegantly founded on mere matter of fact.

THEORY.

If learning be ever productive of happiness, it is when connected with the habit of theory. For a person, under the guidance of this habit, sees in almost every thing a verification of the system; and those objects or combinations which make against him he is expert at removing to a great distance, and, consequently, reducing to almost nothing. He uses reason in the constructive part of his labour; but, because that is fallible, his system will have errors; and to bend and shape facts to support these, is the work of passion. The whole man, therefore, is thrown into an easy current, which produces no counter ones; and to move in it, is to be happy. It is common enough to ridicule minds of this description, but, we fear, not quite so common to understand them; for theory, in some shape or other, has been the failing of the greatest and best of men. It requires no ordinary reach, indeed, to frame a system of any thing that shall stand the test of ordinary examination; for, be the principles ever so sound, and ever so harmonious among themselves, one flaw in the mold which they must be cast in, to be made palpable to common apprehensions, is sufficient to draw upon their author the reprehension of the usual judges of such things.

Every man is inwardly theoretical and positive; and it is because philosophical systems break, or turn into a new direction, his little particular current, that he becomes disposed to pick them to pieces. They are good as long as no interest or vanity of his is disturbed by their influence. But it seems a circumstance to be regretted, that a pre-formed taste, or a prevalent fashion, should suspend a veil between the young inquirer after truth, and those forms of intellect which reside nearest the *adyta* of her fane. The man of exalted theory is to the sceptic, what a jeweller, having his gems laid out in order in his shop, is to a man with an equal quantity huddled up in a wallet on his back. The shop is worth something. Theory has, besides, a kind of generative principle within itself, for it puts ideas, if one may so speak, into a state of fermentation, and extracts a new spirit from their union. Whereas scepticism keeps its perceptions in a cold and unprolific separation, and though they be brilliant as the stars, they are also as unproductive. But theory, like the principle of attraction, tends constantly to unity and proportion, and whoever would wish to see the utmost splendour of the human imagination, must seek for it in the writings of systematic philosophers. This, it is true, has been converted into blame; but let it be remembered, that imagination has been used only as a lamp to light up the deep recesses of an obscure palace, for such is nature.

It appears from what has been said, that theory is something more than a mere case to exhibit truth in; though men fashion it, of necessity, according to the greater or less capacity of their minds. It is in all cases, however, productive of much good. It exercises invention,

and invigorates the discriminating powers. It induces a habit of circumspection, lest a man make the "latter part of his common-wealth contradict the beginning," and accustoms the mind to follow its ideas to their remote consequences, that objections may be foreseen and provided against. The greatest apparent inconvenience resulting from it is dogmatism. But a man is always positive in proportion to the vividness of his conviction of the truth or falsehood of a proposition; and it is only those whose bluntness of perception prevents their arriving at clear ideas of anything, who linger between truth and falsehood in that state which is commonly called being open to conviction. To be sceptical, is to be persuaded of the doubtfulness of everything; and this persuasion may be accompanied by as much dogmatism as the inverse of it. The framer or supporter of a system has always one advantage—he is sure to be more contented with himself, because it is essentially more pleasing to build than to destroy. Spinoza was an illustrious example of this. His opinions were less consolatory, in a certain sense, than those even of Pyrrho himself; but the delight arising from following the path of what he deemed truth, through the whole dominion of nature, made him insensible of almost everything commonly desired by men. He attained, perhaps, as high a degree of that serene felicity which merits the name of happiness, as it is permitted man to reach in this world. His speculations united him to nature: her constancy and sameness lent simplicity and equability to his mind. It does honour to the memory of those princes who sought his society: they must have thought of something distinct from the arts of petty power.

The man without a system, of some sort or other, is a mariner without a chart: he is at the mercy of the winds and waves. In such a man paradox, or, occasionally, a little contradiction, is a venial fault. He attempts to build without cement, and with unhewn stones, and so rents and roughnesses are unavoidable. What is worse, he has favourite notions, though disclaiming a favourite set, and wears them, as the old knights did their mistresses' favours, in his hat, to challenge essay of prowess. These, commonly, are the acute angles of ideas, if the expression be allowable, nipt off from their broad pyramidal bases, and singular from their extreme tenuity. The reader wonders at the fineness of the thought, which dazzles the more from being put in sparkling contrast with the heavy masses around it; as the lightning appears more bright when it cleaves its way through the dark ridges of a cloud. The little sceptic feels the objects around him escape the grasp of his mind; he can never drive them into a *cul de sac* where they must at length turn round and be taken. He lives in a land of shadows in which everything seems disposed to elude being known—he struggles with indistinct forms—he becomes weary without becoming wise—and at length determines to lie still, and suffer the phantoms to mock him as they please. But this is a state of inward agony—a feeling of the absolute nothingness of life. How much better is it to erect a mound upon which speculation may sit above the atmosphere of error! though, occasionally, a cloud may mount and stain the purity of the prospect! *Hic labor, hoc opus est!*

To have a system, is to have an everlasting spur to thought, an aim to which you tend "through evil and through good report." It is this which raises a shaking among the dry bones of knowledge, which

gathers together principles, turns up the soil of the mind, and implants those healthy and vigorous shoots of thought, beneath which happiness delights to recline. It suffers no stagnation in the stream of life, no branching off of minor rivulets into useless channels, but, drawing all into one broad bed, it creates a deep and fertilizing river, of what otherwise might have putrified in a morass. It espouses action to speculation, and the chorus of their epithalamium is—*Valete curas.*

TO THE DOG WHICH SLEEPS AT THE FOOT OF THE TITIAN
VENUS.

You little dog, how can you sleep so?
If I were in your place, I'd creep so
Quickly up higher in the bed
That I would soon be head to head
With her upon that bed reclining;
Who seems to me (forgive me) pining
For me to come and join her there.
I'm vain, you say?---Look at that air---
That eye which beams on me desire---
That mouth which breathes a breath of fire---
That flesh which spreads an atmosphere
Of love in the surrounding sphere---
That arm which, pressing on the sheet,
Proves how superlatively sweet
'Twould be to feel it on one's flesh,
At once so smooth, and warm, and fresh;
With its small hand, so soft and springy---
Its touch---its slightest touch---would wing ye,
Be ye so ever old or stupid,
With all the youth and fire of Cupid,
When springing into Psyche's arms,---
The *Soul* arrayed in mortal charms.
And then the other hand---but no---
Language in vain would farther go---
I gaze---it makes my flesh to creep so---
You little dog, how *can* you sleep so?

β.

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